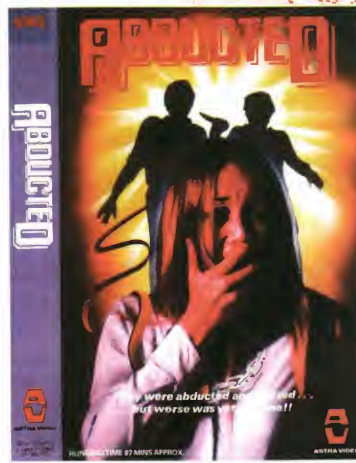
# NASTIES! the return

**Having exhaustively examined the original official DPP 'Nasties' list of the late 70s/early 80s, we move on to an A-Z of some of the nastiest... and weirdest... movies that somehow escaped the net!**




## abducted 1973

You just know this is going to be a mind-bender right from the opening titles. The camera tracks shakily across shelves of porcelain dolls while a godawful song on the soundtrack (hang your head in shame composer/singer Josef Powell) warbles on some old claptrap about "Triangles, circles and squares..."

Only slightly more tuneful than listening to someone scraping their nails across a blackboard, the song is performed in so flat a manner that you may think your VCR is playing at the wrong speed. But even triple speed is too slow to get through this sleazy yawner about two nutty brothers (Gary Kent and John Skoglin) who kidnap young girls and keep them chained in an outhouse for their sexual amusement. It's only when the brothers abduct a resourceful high school girl (Suzanne Lund) that their creepy little games start to go wrong.

The reason they hate women so much is a familiar one. It's all down to the twisted influence of their evil mum, who even murdered her husband so she could have a high old incestuous time with her retarded offspring. A flashback shows the fiance of one of the brothers storming off the premises when she catches him groping mum's boobs! "We've been sleeping together since he was 15" boasts mum proudly.

We're led to believe that mum is still in charge, dictating to the lads from her rocking chair in the attic, but you could have as few brain cells as the brothers and still work out that we're well into Norman Bates territory here. Unfortunately producer, writer and director Don Jones is no Alfred Hitchcock. He might do well running a motel though, anything apart from making movies!

Though amateurishly acted by unknowns who spend as much time staring dumbstruck at the camera as they do delivering their lines, this movie does generate one or two effectively nasty moments. One girl who tries to escape is blasted in the back with a shotgun, while another is stripped in a field and made to play "Doctor" at knife point. There's a particularly tawdry rape, shot with a hand-held camera, and the cold-blooded shooting of the first girl is made all the more effective by being seen at a distance as a passing train blots her spreadeagled body from camera view.

Elsewhere director Jones gets a bit carried away with self-consciously arty camera angles, and proves particularly useless at choreographing the final fight scene between the chief abductor and a would-be rescuer. Wisely resisting the impulse to re-stage *Psycho*'s rocking chair climax, he instead opts for a surprisingly downbeat ending, with one of the crazies rocking back and forth and whimpering - under his brother's hanged body. A typical early video release from Astra's Mike Behr, who brought you *Snuff* and *I Spit On Your Grave* (and later went on to create the *Bounce* line of big boob videos!) this tape opens with a great trailer for *The Jesus Trip*, a 70s biker flick that features a nun on a Harley. Happy days, eh readers?

**DVD details:**
No sign of this one yet, and for that we must all be thankful.

## the amazing mr. no legs 1975

What we have here is the reverse of *A Man Called Ironside*, a tough, shot-in-Florida crime thriller about a gang of drug smugglers whose main enforcer is the ruthless Mr. No Legs, so called not because he drinks too much, but because, having lost said limbs in an explosion, he now wheels round town wasting cops and fellow crims alike from a motorised wheelchair equipped with double-barrelled shotguns as arm rests. Just try nicking his disabled parking space and see what happens!

No Legs (played by real-life amputee Ron Slinker) is the main enforcer for suave crime boss Hart Bochner, an equal opportunity employer who's making a fortune smuggling cocaine capsules inside Cuban cigars. Like many wheelchair-bound folk, No Legs is fed up with being pushed around, and he determines to bump Bochner off and take over his narcotics empire. But Bochner is also getting worried about No Legs' cold-blooded methods and so he orders a bunch of his heavies to dispose of the threat.

Meanwhile, honest cops Ted Vollrath - who has the biggest mustache in the precinct - and Richard Jaeckel (never-aging star of *The Green Slime*) investigate the death of the former's sister, which eventually leads them to uncover a crooked cop who is feeding vital info to Bochner. This also puts their lives in danger from the man in the deadly wheelchair...

Efficiently directed by Ricou Browning (who's best known for having played The Creature From The Black Lagoon in the 1953 classic's underwater sequences), *The Amazing Mr. No Legs* is a much better movie than you might imagine from its title. Once you get past the dodgy 70s fashions and horrible song interludes from a gruesome easy-listening duo called Mercy (who wouldn't have appeared at all if they'd lived up to their name), the film becomes a pretty entertaining exploitationer, well acted by a capable cast that includes 50s B-movie stalwart John Agar.

The straightforward story hooks your attention from the start, the performances are competent if uninspired, and the screenplay even finds room for some snappy dialogue: spotting a black guy in mile-high platforms with matching earrings, Jaeckel comments, "He could be a pusher..." to which his partner wryly replies, "He's a pusher all right, but what he's pushing you stroke, you don't smoke!"

The action scenes are well choreographed, with plenty of blood squibs when needed, and the movie gets quite brutal at times, with lingering close-ups of a female informer being stabbed, and a would-be assassin getting impaled on his own sword, which exits through his stomach. Though obviously done on a modest budget, the film does end with a lengthy *Smokey And The Bandit*-type car chase, during which half a dozen vehicles are demolished.

But of course the real drawing card is No Legs himself, whose big moment comes when he disposes of a small army of attackers, using the throwing stars attached to his wheel hubs and some nifty limbless judo to batter one guy into submission with his stumps! It's a shame after all this that he gets bumped off so easily at the end, but when you hear Mercy's brain-rotting song over the end titles, you'll realise he was very wise to make an early exit! Would that we'd been wise enough to join him!

**DVD details:**
None. This has never been released, nor even escaped onto a DVD-R.

## the astro zombies XXXX

Co-written and produced by Wayne Rogers (later of *M*A*S*H* fame), and directed by ultra-prolific schlock horror veteran Ted V. Mikels (*Blood Orgy Of The She Devils, The Corpse Grinders*), this barmy low-budgeter melds big boob sexploitation thrills with 60s spy-fi antics, throwing in a couple of unconvincing robot zombies to season the Z-movie stew. The end result is the kind of movie they really don't make any more - and we can all be thankful for that!

Aged low-rent horror king John Carradine plays his usual mad doctor part, working alongside a hunchbacked assistant of course. He's managed to create a solar-powered astro-zombie in his cellar, a creature who looks just like a normal guy with a skeleton-painted crash helmet over his head. Carradine thinks that this could be a big boon to humanity. "Unfortunately the only brain available to me was that of a psychopathic killer," he sighs, which explains why the monster is always out and about murdering hot girl-next-door-type babes after they have stripped to their undies.

Though she doesn't get top billing, bounteous Russ Meyer heroine Tura Satana (*Faster, Pussycat, Kill! Kill!*) is the real star of the show, playing a sinister villainess who spends most of her time lounging around puffing reductively on a cigarette holder. She wants to get hold of the astro-zombies for her Chinese communist bosses, and is happy to bump off anyone who gets in her way.

On the gore front the movie doesn't approach the blood and guts content of the latter day post-Romero living dead flicks. There are some fun scenes at the end when the zombie goes bananas with a cardboard cleaver, sinking it deep into a bonce or two, but for the most part Mikels lacks the budget and the effects expertise to deliver anything remotely believable in this area. The scenes showing Carradine fiddling about with obviously plastic brains and organs might have worked better in black and white, but then we'd have missed the lurid colour camerawork that is one of the movie's few plus points.

It seems, however, that Ted was more interested in making a 60s spy thriller than a straightforward gore flick, and the film is much of a piece with other Mikels movies of the period like *Doll Squad*, with its many amateurishly staged shootouts.

Nowadays the film's deliriously dated mis-en-scene gives it an interest value it never had when first released, and modern cult audiences will get quite a few chuckles out of the sexy Ms. Satana's caricaturish performance, and the classic sequence where a zombie gets a torch jammed into its head and wanders around in a day-for-night delirium. After this it's a real let-down when all that Carradine has to do to stop the zombie dead in its tracks is throw a power switch!

**DVD details:**
This one was released by Image in the USA as a bog-standard disc a couple of years back. No extras but the transfer used was a decent one.

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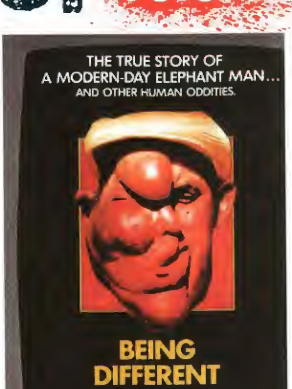


## Being Different 1982

Not half as grim as the cover image would have you believe, this insightful Canadian documentary sets out to prove that, hey, freaks are people too, you know, and so skillfully is the film made that it does indeed succeed in altering our perception of what the word "normal" really means.

Our first sight of narrator Christopher Plummer is as a distorted image in a fairground mirror. "Suppose we were stuck here," he says. "Suppose that this image would never pop back. Suppose you were like Alice, held hostage on the other side of the looking glass." He then proceeds to introduce us to some people who are indeed "curiouser and curiouser."

The opening sequence takes us to a carnival in Florida where we meet a rather jolly fire-eating dwarf, and identical siamese twins Ronnie and Donnie, who share the same stomach and admit that they often get into fights and hit each other. There's also Big Paul Fish, a huge fat fellow weighing in at 729 pounds who suggests that the traditional concept that fat people are always happy is a myth. Only the carnival barker makes a laugh out of poor Paul's 80 inch waist. "It takes four girls to hug him and a boxcar to lug him!"

Continuing on the carny circuit we also meet Big Betsy from Boston, who's huge enough to have her own postal code. She says her husband is only eleven stone, and that she likes men with moustaches. Pass that razor, quick!

Half-baby, half lady Dolly Reagan has the body of a small child and the face of an old woman, but she speaks very eloquently about a happy "normal" life spent in carnival sideshows. Similar stories come from a bearded woman (who looks like one of Charles Laughton's "mistakes" in *The Island Of Lost Souls*) and her extra-tall hubby. But he's not as far off the ground as Sandy Allen, seven foot seven and in 1980, when the film was made, the tallest woman in the world. Sandy fields questions at the Guinness Museum of World Records, and turns out to have an amusingly mordant sense of humour.

Moving to the opposite end of the spectrum we then get the chance to attend The Little People Of America Convention in Los Angeles, and meet a variety of interesting characters, none of whom like to be called midgets. "We've got 600 little people here this time, and it's growing every year," says one, without a trace of irony.

Cover boy Bob Melvin is a modern day *Elephant Man*, and no doubt the reason that the documentary got funding in the first place - to cash in on David Lynch's movie, a recent box office hit at the time. Unlike the tragic David Merrick, Elephant Bob is lucky enough to live in Lancaster, Missouri, a place "where people count their blessings and know their friends." So nobody even batts an eyelid when he walks down Lancaster's main street. Check out this cover and see if he'd cause a stir in your home town. After hearing him talk about his life and seeing him in church with his family, you stop thinking of him as some kind of monster.

Made with taste and restraint, the documentary wisely lets the interesting protagonists speak for themselves, only descending into saccharine moralising with a yukky song called "Being Different," which suggests life would be just like a TV commercial "If we could love each other a little bit more and sing a song of the human heart." It doesn't need to employ such hackneyed tactics, because spending an hour and a half in the company of these "different" folks is an uplifting experience.

**DVD Details:** No disc release yet, and none planned.

## The Black Panther 1978

This grim little movie resembles a feature length *Crimewatch* reconstruction, with the nasty bits shown rather than tastefully skipped over. It tells the true story of Donald Neilson, a kidnapper and killer who began his criminal career in 1972, robbing post offices with a military precision. Nicknamed The Black Panther because he wore a black hood with eye slits, Neilson terrorised, beat and shot his often elderly victims and quickly became one of the most wanted men in Britain. Then in 1975 he abducted 17-year-old heiress Lesley Whittle and demanded a ransom of £50,000. He had worked out what he felt was a foolproof plan to collect the cash, but the ransom delivery went wrong. Two months later the girl's body was found hanging in an underground shaft, and the police discovered clues that eventually led them to Neilson...

The Black Panther case may not mean much to many modern viewers, but if you lived in Britain and were old enough to read the papers in the early-to-mid 70s you'll recall the news at that time was full of little else. Neilson was almost as infamous a

character as Peter Sutcliffe, the Yorkshire Ripper, and when this movie was announced not long after Neilson began his life sentence there was a bit of a furore, because it was felt the makers were exploiting a real-life tragedy without waiting a decent interval for time to heal wounds.

Perhaps bearing this in mind, the movie is remarkably unsensational in tone, dwelling more on the twisted character of Neilson than any of his victims. Though lacking any psychological insight, this approach works mainly due to a strong performance by Donald Sumpter (of *Night After Night After Night*). Neilson was a fitness freak and gun nut who ruled his family with an iron hand, basically a sociopathic thug, and it's a tribute to Sumpter that he makes him believably human as well as hateful - a man who could be leafing through a scrap book of atrocity pictures one minute, and crying over a sad film on the telly the next!

There's no doubt Neilson got a great deal of sadistic pleasure from his crimes. He used to break in and rob post offices at night while the people who ran the place slept, and in most cases he could have got clean away without alerting anybody. Instead he preferred to go upstairs and rob and torture the proprietors as well. He carried a shotgun and frequently used it, inevitably with fatal results.

Michael (*Mark Of The Devil*) Armstrong's script is a careful reconstruction of actual events that never embroiders or deviates from the known facts. This is most obvious when it comes to the killing of Lesley Whittle. Neilson always maintained that he didn't kill her, and that she slipped off her underground "perch" and accidentally hung herself. The ambiguous way the film is shot leaves it up to the viewer to decide, but it seems likely Neilson did deliberately murder the girl.

The most effective moments are those showing Neilson at home with his wife and teenage daughter, boring, mundane scenes of a loveless family life which contrast strikingly with the "excitement" of the Panther's crimes. The movie as a whole is more mundane that exciting. It's very well made, but too grim and low key to appeal to the kind of morbid thrill-seekers likely to be attracted by the subject matter.

**DVD Details:** There's a bootleg DVD-R of this one available, but we haven't seen it to check out the quality.

## Blood Orgy of the She Devils 1972

The title's great, but don't expect the movie itself to be so, er, sensational. In fact it's a dreary effort about a gal named Mara (Lila Zaborin), who is the head of a coven of scantily-clad witches who sacrifice men to various demons. Mara also presides over the odd seance or two, where she contacts an Indian spirit guide who talks like Tonto out of The Lone Ranger and dispenses such sage advice as "No take big shiny bird across big waters." And that's some of the more sensible dialogue on offer here. One of these seances is attended by young lovers Lorraine (Leslie McRae) and Mark (Tom Pace). They are suitably impressed by Mara's strange ability to talk nonsense like a native, and report their findings back to Mark's theology teacher, Professor Helsford (Victor Izay), who happens to be an expert in the occult. Helsford warns them not to get too involved. When Mara's not busy holding seances, she helps pay the rent by using her magical powers as a supernatural hit lady. A sleazy-looking gangster hires her to bump off a United Nations ambassador, but after the deed is done he reneges on the deal and has Mara killed as well, or so it seems. In fact she returns from the grave, reincarnated first as a cat, then as herself, and uses her formidable voodoo powers to bump off the double-crossing crim and his equally unsavoury associates.

It has to be said that even by Ted's standards this is bottom of the barrel rubbish. Though it clocks in at a mere 73 minutes, the movie seems to last several lifetimes. It's all talk, talk, talk, punctuated by some choppy, unconvincing flashbacks to the barbaric witch hunts of old. Eventually the innocent Lorraine falls victim to Mara's spells and becomes part of the She Devil cult, at which point Professor Helsford rouses himself from his lethargy and gets round to the witch's place with a few of his colleagues to dole out a full-blown exorcism. Unfortunately, Lorraine dies in the process, but you can't make an omelette without breaking a few eggs, right? In this case, the yolk's on the viewer...

**DVD Details:** Image Entertainment put a R1 disc of this out in 2001. It was a no frills disc with a reasonably decent transfer of the movie on it.

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## Bloodrage 1979

This sleazy little 1979 chiller stars Ian Scott as a psychotic young guy who goes to visit a hooker. When she taunts him about his inexperience he gets the old red mist in front of his eyes and shoves her head-first through a window, slicing her throat. He hides in the closet with the body when the local sheriff (James Johnston) drops in for a visit, then puts the corpse in a wheelbarrow to bury it in the woods. Shortly afterwards our hero heads for New York's Times Square, where there are plenty more ladies of the night to slice up.

Back in Hicksville USA, the sheriff (who also happened to be the dead hooker's girlfriend) has finally figured out that the young man he saw going into the prossie's place has done her in and hidden the body. Disobeying orders from his superiors he heads for New York on a vigilante mission to put the young crackpot in a body bag without benefit of trial by jury...

As the maverick lawman closes in on his prey, Scott moves in with a spaced-out female drug pusher, with whom - in an interesting touch - he carries on a fairly normal, non-sexual relationship, while picking his victims off the street. He tortures one working girl by nearly drowning her in a bathtub, then strangles her with a phone cord when one of her punters rings to book an appointment. At the end he's about to claim yet another victim when the crazed cop catches up with him. In one of the most jaw-droppingly abrupt climaxes in the history of exploitation cinema, the loopy lawman picks up the killer and throws him out of the hotel window to splatter on the pavement below. That's justice, B-movie style.

Though hardly absorbing entertainment, the film is at least quite well made of its kind. Ian Scott looks like a young Christopher Walken, and he manages to bring a small measure of depth to his cliched character (who even narrates some of the movie). The same sadly can't be said for James Johnston, who's more of a Soppy Harry than a Dirty Harry, and appears even more pathetic when he's sharing a scene with old pro Lawrence Tierney, wasted as a tough New York cop who aids Johnston in his search.

The video cover image of the first murdered prostitute is about as gory as this one gets. It's pretty nasty in places though. The sex scenes are fairly explicit, and the film has a compellingly sleazy atmosphere which comes from gritty location filming. It was co-produced by Joseph Zito (who later directed *Rosemary's Killer* and the Chuck Norris hit, *Invasion USA*). The sleeve notes optimistically suggest the movie is a bit like *Taxi Driver*, yeah, as much like it as *Carry On Cabby*...

DVD AVAILABILITY: Nobody has yet bothered to put this one out on DVD, so the old VHS tape is the only way to see it.

## Blood Vengeance 1979

"Carlo could be the next James Dean" sighs besotted Francoise, a photographic model, referring to her good-looking hunk of a boyfriend, an up and coming actor who loves to show off his musclebound physique. Carlo certainly drives a sports car as recklessly as the late 50s heartthrob, but since he is played by Big George Eastman, we know that he's destined for even finer things, as the intestine-scoffing star of *The Anthropophagous Beast*!

In fact Carlo's a real sleaze, and when Francoise discovers him bonking another centrefold model-type, he laughs in her face and throws her out of their apartment. She wanders around in a trance for a while and then commits suicide by walking in front of a train. Down at the city morgue Francoise's body is viewed by her sister Emanuelle, who is also handed a letter found on her sister's body. As she reads it we flash back to a series of incidents that reveal just how much of a slime dear old Carlo really is...

First of all we see Carlo taking Francoise to visit the location of one of his movies. The producer is a fat, cigar-smoking sleazebag. "We're not making arty-farty flicks for intellectual faggots!" he explains, groping Francoise while Carlo takes a discreet walk. Then when he loses a bundle at the card table, Carlo repays his sweaty-faced fellow players by allowing them to watch while he gives Francoise what in the exploitation biz is politely known as a good seeing to.

"A man like that should pay for what he's done," sighs one of the morgue attendants, and Emanuelle is in total agreement. She uses her feminine charms to get close to Carlo and then drugs him and chains him up in a soundproof room behind a see-through mirror. This gives her the opportunity to bring men back to make love to in front of his tormented eyes, and to stage a kinky lesbian threesome which from the pained look on his face causes our hero some almighty trouser turbulence! Eventually Big George breaks free and it's goodbye Emanuelle as he parts her hair with a meat cleaver. But fate has one final trick to play, and the final scene gives an ironic nod to Roger Corman's movie version of Poe's *Fit And The Pendulum*...

You've got to give the distributors of this one credit for putting the best possible still on the cover of the video. Unfortunately for the most part the film is much lighter on gore than it is kinky sex scenes. Though supposedly mashed by a train, Francoise's body seems fully intact, and there doesn't even seem to have been enough in the makeup budget for the old cardboard cleaver in the head gag. In the end, *Blood Vengeance* is a moderately entertaining sex and horror yarn with some strong erotic sequences.

**DVD Availability:** Although Joe D'Amato is pretty well represented on DVD, this movie is only out (under the title of *Emanuelle's Revenge*) as an obscure DVD-R, which actually looks to have been duped up from the old VHS tapes!

## Bloody Friday 1972

The sleeve images used by Mercury Video on this violent 1972 West German thriller give away what eventually happens to the bad guys, who as you can see are machine-gunned to death at the end. Not that they don't deserve such a treatment, because a more reprehensible bunch you would have to go a long way to meet. The worst of the lot is Heinz (Raimund Harmstorf), a terrorist leader who's 57 varieties of trouble for the authorities. We're never told exactly what terrorist group Heinz belongs to. But maybe it's the Asda separatists, 'cos his big plan is to steal a million dollars from the bank and use the money to open a supermarket!

In the opening scenes he engineers his escape from police custody, smashing his guards' heads against a toilet wall until they collapse in a bloody heap. The next step is to steal the necessary weapons for the robbery, which entails Heinz and his buddies hijacking a military vehicle containing grenades and machine guns. Then, after a fairly violent Thursday comes *Bloody Friday*, the day of the robbery. Predictably enough things do not go according to plan. There's always some joker who wants to play the hero, and in this case it's one of the older members of bank staff who goes for the panic button and is rewarded by having his hand shot off. Once the alarm goes off, the police arrive fairly quickly and surround the building turning the robbery into a hostage situation, and things can only get worse as the terrorists bicker among themselves, abuse their prisoners and make impossible demands of the authorities. We've all seen this before, and how often do the cops serve up a million quid and a helicopter to Cuba without pulling some sort of double cross? Never, right? Wrong! Amazingly, the German police decide to give in to the robbers' demands, allowing them the chance to escape, not in a chopper but in a battered old car, then following at a discreet distance until they can surround them in the forest and chop them to pieces with machine-gun fire. See? There's always a catch!

*Bloody Friday* is actually a well-made crime thriller, liberally salted with scenes of gloating violence. There's a particularly nasty sequence where a young child gets hold of a terrorist hand grenade and pulls the pin out. A cop throws himself on top of it to prevent the child being injured and we see close-ups of his ripped apart stomach, intestines hanging out.

"No one can commit crime without having to pay for it," runs a quote over the end titles, giving this gritty exploitationer a moral excuse for its violent excesses, and one certainly wouldn't want to mess with the German police if their tactics are as brutal as we witness here.

**DVD Availability:** No legal DVD version of this exists, though again there have been (unconfirmed) reports of bootleg DVD-Rs in circulation. It seems unlikely that anyone will bother putting this out as a 'proper' release, but of course we will inevitably inform you if they do!

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**Naschy soon finds out when she takes him back to her place to meet her two sisters. One is confined to a wheelchair, while the other has a metal hand. It's plainly obvious that all three are a few sandwiches short of a picnic, but Naschy decides to stick around anyway, and take a job as a handyman in between 'servicing' them in the bedroom!**

This 1973 Spanish chiller is one of the strangest movies made by the former weightlifter turned horror star Paul Naschy, and considering his incredible output, I guess that is really saying something. In fact it was Naschy's first non-supernatural movie in a busy career that saw him playing werewolves, mummies, and Count Dracula, mostly badly.

The movie opens with unemployed drifter Paul hitching his way across country. He's picked up by a sexy, good-looking woman who seems to be a bit of a nymphomaniac from the way she drools over Naschy's hunky, chunky topless girth! Are there any more like her at home? Naschy soon finds out when she takes him back to her place to meet her two sisters. One is confined to a wheelchair, while the other has a metal hand. It's plainly obvious that all three are a few sandwiches short of a picnic, but Naschy decides to stick around anyway, and take a job as a handyman in between servicing them in the bedroom.

Shortly after Naschy's arrival, a succession of blue-eyed, blonde-haired girls start going missing from the nearby village. Their bodies are found with the eyes gouged out, and suspicion falls on Naschy, who is then forced to go on the run from the cops to prove his innocence. Can he uncover the real killer before the village runs out of blondes?

The identity of the real killer is actually not that hard to guess, since wheelchair-bound characters always seem to have nasty secrets in movies like this. But because you're unlikely to see this anyway, I might as well tell you that in a bizarre twist it is revealed a local psychiatrist is behind the killings. It turns out he has been hypnotising the paralysed sister, and under his power she's been getting out of her chair and chopping up the young girls, to fulfil the Doc's twisted - and typically cock-eyed - desire for revenge over the death of his own blue-eyed, blonde-haired daughter. Okay, it doesn't make any sense, but then neither does the movie as a whole.

Atrocious dubbing and murky camerawork (at least in this particular video print) doesn't help the film's entertainment value, nor does the fact that it's totally lacking in the kind of black humour that should have been endemic to such a crazy narrative. Ah well, at least Naschy buffs will get their money's worth, because our boy gets to show off his beefy physique in a couple of rather unattractive sex scenes, and displays his fighting skills as well, in a laughable knife fight that ends with his opponent being stabbed. He also steps in a bear trap, and his pained expression is priceless - no Oscar this time Paul, sorry lad.

**DVD Availability:** Midnight Video in the USA have released an uncut version of this movie on DVD-R. The picture quality is not bad, but the English-dubbed version has non-removable Dutch subtitles. Check it out at www.midnight1.com/dvdr11.asp.

## The Boarding House 1982

This obscure 1982 haunted house horror flick was actually the first of its kind to be shot on videotape and then transferred to 35mm film, a process that the makers like to call "Horrorvision." I know what I'd call it. It's pretty horrid looking, that's for sure! The film even played some American cinemas, which is hard to believe - I bet the theatre owner made himself scarce when the punters came out afterwards!

Opening with a lengthy but impossible-to-read computer print-out (accompanied by annoying electronic beeps) which seems to be referring to the history of the cursed residence of the title, the movie cuts to a woman putting her hand down a waste disposal unit and screaming when the thing comes on unexpectedly. Well you would,

wouldn't you?

There are also some unrelated shots of a guy sitting beside a swimming pool. A weird spirit figure turns up and the guy falls in the water and drowns. Meanwhile, down at the local hospital, a nurse hangs herself with her own (surgical?) stockings and the doctor who finds her body pulls his own guts out and expires in a welter of blood. What all this has to do with the story is never made clear. Perhaps it was explained by the computer printout?

The hero of our story is Jim (Hawk Adly), a blow-dry blond urban cowboy with a gold earring and tye-died muscle shirt. He practices telekinesis and can move pot plants and bars of soap with his mind. He also keeps a pyramid on his bed to meditate under. Jim buys the supposedly haunted Hoffman place and turns it into a boarding house. His newspaper ad is very specific and far from politically correct: Wanted: Unattached and beautiful girls between 18 and 25 to share my 10 bedroom home! "Just imagine all those hot numbers hanging around the pool," he fantasises. "Yeah, it'll be a real bachelor's paradise!"

It isn't long before a bunch of brain-dead LA bimbos turn up to make his erotic dreams come true. But weird things start to happen. One of the girls has her hand screwered by an ice-pick ("I think she'll be all right. All her fingers work, I checked them.") and another sees blood in the shower and imagines she has the head of a pig! Then things get serious, with death by electrocution (the old hairdryer-in-the-bath routine), and stoning. Who can be behind all this? A likely candidate seems to be the ridiculous gardener, a limping peeping Tom Vietnam vet who's also played by the, er, multi-talented Hawk Adly (!).

Events all come to a head at a pool party where the heroine, Victoria (played by scriptwriter Jonema), performs with a crummy rock band called 331/3. It seems that one of the girls (the one with an English voice) is the daughter of the Hoffman household and she's possessed by an evil spirit which makes her breathe steam and talk like she's got an echo chamber round her head. Luckily Jim knows how to combat bad psychic karma, and he hits her with such Necronomicon-inspired gems as "Focus! White light! White Light!"

The movie shouldn't be so dull really, because it takes in a fair smattering of gratuitous nudity (when one of the girls is attacked in the shower, she makes sure to squash her boobs tantalisingly against the glass for a minute or so), some modest gore effects and even a girlie pie fight for those who like that sort of thing. But it's actually even worse than it sounds, with awful photography, lousy rock music on the soundtrack, and an all-over-the-place narrative that makes you want to hit the stop button after about ten minutes - that's if you manage to make it through the computer printouts...

DVD Availability: Not surprisingly this is impossible to find, even on a bootleg DVD-R. Thank goodness.

too much for his own good, while the red herrings pile up around him. But there's no piano player called Sam on hand, Sacchi doesn't seem to know how to whistle, and his uncanny resemblance to the late Hollywood star is really of no consequence at all to the plot. Whether it added any extra box office appeal is doubtful, since the

## Bogeyman and the French Murders 1972

This middling Italian-made giallo from 1972 kicks off with a murder in the exclusive Paris brothel run by Madame Colette (played by a somewhat blowsy-looking Anita Ekberg). One of the hookers has been slashed to death, and in the frame for the killing is Antoine, a petty criminal with a history of violence. Wrongly convicted and sentenced to death by guillotine (things move pretty fast in the French courts by the looks of it), Antoine makes a desperate bid for freedom. But as he's bombing down a country lane on a stolen motorcycle with the cops in hot pursuit, he is gruesomely decapitated by the tailgate of a lorry! Poetic justice or what?

Then in a mysterious turn of events, Antoine's lopped off bonce is requested by Professor Waldemar (Franco regular Howard Vernon), a sinister scientist who wants to use Antoine's eyes for some possibly Franco-esque experiments. Not long after this, the judge who sentenced Antoine to death is found with his throat slashed, and various witnesses to the brothel murders similarly start turning up in body bags. Has the spirit of the murderer returned to take revenge from beyond the grave?

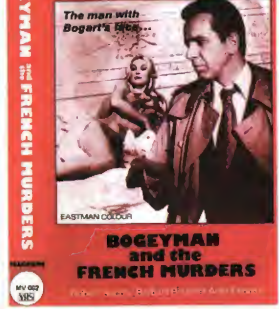
The biggest mystery about this colourful exploitationer is why on earth the lead character had to be a Humphrey Bogart lookalike. As the dogged Inspector Fontaine, Robert Sacchi skulks about in a trench-coat, smoking real Bogey had been dead for years when this movie came out.

There's no point in trying to figure out whodunnit, or indeed why they dunnit, because the solution when it comes typically makes no sense at all.

Best to sit back and enjoy the sleazy Euroschlock ride, which takes in plenty of classy women in various states of undress (though thankfully Anita keeps her togs on) and some effective Carlo Rambaldi makeup work depicting poked-out eyes, slashed throats and two separate decapitations.

The film also makes good use of interesting Parisian locations, and is topped and tailed by two effective chase sequences set around the Eiffel Tower, from which the killer plunges at the end in as phoney a bit of camera trickery as I've seen in ages - it looks like someone has painted his falling silhouette on the print, frame by frame!

DVD Availability: Mondo Macabro recently released a superb quality DVD of this under the title of *The Paris Sex Murders*. We reviewed it a couple of issues back.



# NASTIES! the return

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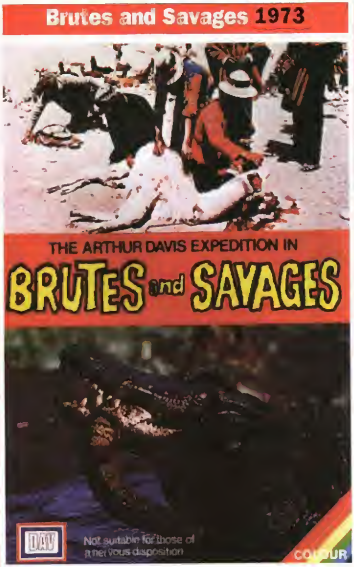
## Brutes and Savages 1973




**The last scene is in many ways the most outrageous, yet another secret mating ritual which shows South American tribesmen shagging their llamas, possibly in an effort to make them go faster.**

Former Florida theatre owner Arthur Davis got himself some Japanese financial backing and jumped on the mondo bandwagon with this repulsive and humourless effort in which a variety of animals are slaughtered in the name of "entertainment." Sadists with the stomach for this sort of thing should also be warned, though, because apart from the gruesome highlights it's also one of the most boring films of its kind, with many sequences that are so obviously faked as to be laughable. The film was originally advertised with the modest claim, "After *Jaws* and *King Kong* comes another box office blockbuster!" and it was released on video in the States by the same company that put out the *Faces Of Death* series. But you know this is going to be tripe right from the lousy imitation Philly disco track over the opening credits. The movie invites us to accompany "Mr. Showmanship" Davis on a trip to South America, where among the perils he faces is a big rubber crocodile that snaps up one of the slower-moving natives. This scene is a real joke, with fake arms floating to the surface and a croc that looks about as realistic as Ed Wood's *Bride Of The Monster* octopus! "We shuddered a little at what we had witnessed," sighs narrator Richard Johnson (*Zombie Flesh-Eaters*). Yeah, poor special effects always make us do that as well. Davis explains that his crew went to incredible risks to film the secret marriage rituals of a tribe of headhunters, concealing cameras with telephoto lenses in the bush to get close to their subjects without alerting them. The only problem is that the next scene, involving said headhunters (a young man and woman), is obviously shot square on from about two feet away! The camera even moves in closer as the two primitives hack up a large sea turtle in an extremely sadistic manner. First they slit its throat, and then they strangle it.

You can see this scene wasn't faked, but I have the feeling the wedding ritual bit is bullshit, just designed to show the "savagery" of these sadistic jungle-dwellers (who probably came from Central Casting, LA).

Whatever, the ritual seems to work well, because in the next scene we see the young couple having quality sex in their hut - don't ask where the telephoto lens is hidden this time round...

Another equally suspect scene involves a "coming of age" ritual performed for a young native woman, in which a poor donkey is viciously slaughtered, gutted and buried in a hole. But don't worry, animal rights campaigners, because the comforting narration informs us: "As the long shadows fall it is time for drinking again, and laughter. Once more the gods have been appeased..."

Davis and his expedition also encounter a tribe who like to throw stones at each other (haven't we got enough people like that back in the "civilised" world?), and one guy gets bashed on the head so hard that he needs cranial surgery. As luck would have it, Arthur knows a doctor who can do this, and we're into some pretty gruelling open-skull operating room footage filmed in unflinching closeup. But don't take this as evidence that any sort of brainpower went into this sorry enterprise...

The last scene is in many ways the most outrageous, yet another secret mating ritual which shows South American tribesmen shagging their llamas, possibly in an effort to make them go faster. Does this make *Brutes And Savages* the only widely distributed film to get away with depicting animal sex apart from that Swedish one about the chicken farm? As presented here, it's hardly what I'd call a turn-on, but then neither is the film as a whole. However, it was enough of a success to encourage Davis to go on and make *The Art Of Killing*, a similarly tacky documentary about Japanese martial arts. I bet he's proud of his achievements.

**DVD Availability:** Synapse Films of the USA have released a good quality fullscreen DVD of this movie complete with extras (excerpts from producer Davis's Expedition Diary). It's region free as well. As to whether it's worth buying, we'll leave that to you.

## Cannibal 1976

Massimo Foschi is the star of the show, and he is put in a cage so that native children can urinate on him. Possibly it adds to the flavour. He's spared the cooking pot when a sexy native girl (Me Me Lay) rescues him, and the two head off into the jungle with the rest of the tribe in hot pursuit. When they catch up with her they split her open and fill her body with hot coals. Definitely adds to the flavour. In the end our hero only manages to survive by turning native, ripping the heart out of one of his pursuers and scoffing it raw while the cannibals look on approvingly.

It's a mystery how this movie escaped being banned alongside all the other video nasties with *Cannibal* in the title, but maybe the official BBFC "X" Certificate that opens Derann's version has something to do with it. And of course, as the opening subtitle explains, the events portrayed in the film actually took place… Yeah, right. If you believe the guy who brought you *Cannibal Holocaust* then that's just fine.

Not the first entry in the mondo-style Cannibal genre (that honour belongs to Umberto Lenzi's 1972 *Deep River Savages*), the film was shot two years before Deodato's *Holocaust* in 1976, and originally released as *The Last Survivor*. The plot follows pretty much the standard formula for the genre, with a small group of people (three men and a woman) taking a plane ride to the deepest recesses of some forbidden jungle (in the Phillipines rather than the Amazon, just for a change) and ending up falling foul of the usual bunch of raggle taggle, flesh-eating natives.

The group are supposedly on an oil exploration mission. Landing on a makeshift runway damages their plane, and while it is being repaired they discover gruesomely decomposed bodies in the nearby vicinity. In short order they are picked off by nasty booby traps - notably that old favourite, the spiked wooden ball that comes swinging out of nowhere to impale one of them against a tree. The pilot of the plane is captured by the natives, who hang him up naked, and encourage him to fly. He goes splat instead.

muttering incomprehensible dialogue which probably translates as "He should put a bit of pepper on that…"

There's a little bit of animal cruelty (an alligator is gutted and a snake eats a lizard), but the movie's nowhere near as nasty in this respect as others of its ilk. Even the cannibals are more civilised, cooking their human food before wolfing it down. The cruellest scene shows a native woman giving birth to a baby on the banks of a river, biting the umbilical cord, then throwing the infant to a passing alligator! The morning after pill would have been so much kinder…

The sex scenes are actually stronger and more plentiful than the gore ones, and Me Me Lay performs ably in these, even though her status as a bona fide native girl is called into question by her liberal use of eye makeup.

It's always seemed a shame to me that these Cannibal movies were only ever released in atrocious-looking video transfers. Derann's looks like it was taken from a print that has seen the light of many a projector bulb, with more scratches than a cat's favourite toy. Seeing remastered versions on DVD usually reveals their photography to be breathtaking, and the difficult circumstances under which they were made must command a certain amount of respect as well. *Cannibal* is not the best of them - I think that honour must go to *Holocaust* - but it's not the worst either. In fact it's a pretty good movie that makes you realise there are worse places to visit than Milton Keynes.

**DVD Availability:** Hardgore submitted a pre-cut version of this movie to the BBFC in July of 2003. It was passed 'uncut' but is still missing around two and a half minutes of footage. Shriek Show's region free Jungle Holocaust presents the movie genuinely uncut and in a decent widescreen transfer, so that's obviously the way to go.

## Carnival of Blood 1970

Roll up! Roll up! Roll up something mind-altering if you want to spend some time with this mind-rotting schlock horror cheapie! Set in and around a Coney Island amusement park, it has an amateurish, improvised feel reminiscent of the worst of Herschell Gordon Lewis, and some of the most unconvincing performances you're likely to see outside of the House of Commons…

The movie revolves around assorted characters visiting the same dowdy boardwalk amusements and then getting bumped off by a mystery killer. In every case the victims follow the same predestined route to their appointment with a body bag. First of all they try their luck at a darts-throwing stand run by balding, piercing-eyed Tom and his scarred, retarded assistant Gimpy. Popping the requisite number of balloons wins a cheap and nasty teddy bear, and there are extra points for insulting Gimpy. Next stop is the cigar-smoking gypsy fortune teller, who always sees something nasty in the cards. Then it's time for the morgue.

The first victim is a pretty young girl who emerges from the ghost train without her head - her fake mannequin neck gurgling blood while her boyfriend throws up his hot dog! The first medic on the scene sighs, "Shame, she was a good looking chick. Have we got time for a sandwich before we finish up?"

The second victim is a sarcastic hooker who latches onto an inebriated sailor (the saddest approximation of a drunk act I've ever seen on celluloid) and attempts to fleece him. First she passes on the darts to hurl a few insults at Gimpy instead, then she comes up with a "Don't start reading any long novels" reading at the fortune tellers. Her sailor boyfriend staggers off, leaving her easy prey for a psycho with a huge carving knife who slices her stomach open and pulls out a hefty handful of intestines.

The third victim is a fat blonde with stupid sunglasses, who looks like she belongs in a John Waters movie. She goes the same route, and since she's the most irritating she suffers the most grisly fate, having her tongue severed, her eyes gouged out, and then her head bashed in with a brick. Believe me, she deserved worse.

Of course Gimpy is the chief suspect in these killings, which makes it fairly obvious that Tom the darts man is the real menace. It seems that his mum took his favourite teddy bear away when he was a kid, and now he likes to murder young women and stuff his bears with their guts and eyes. There's room for a groundbreaking psychological case study to be done here. But before the shrinks can get their hands on him, Tom runs into the road and gets squashed by a truck, expiring in a welter of red paint. Boring in the extreme, and very badly photographed in murky 16mm, *Carnival Of Blood* belongs to that rare and privileged group of films that can truly be classed as virtually unwatchable. Not so much low-budget as no-budget, it wasn't released to cinemas until 1976, when its star Burt Young (billed here under his real name of John Harris) had made it big in *Rocky*. Witnessing Burt's ridiculous rolling-eyed performance, it's a wonder anyone employed him ever again.

**DVD Availability:** A few years back Something Weird (USA) released a region free disc of *Carnival Of Blood* on a double bill with the even more atrocious *Curse Of The Headless Horseman*. The film was framed at fullscreen and looked like it had been transferred from a mediocre 16mm print. There were no extras, for which we must all be truly thankful.

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## Cemetery of the Living Dead 1965

**Barbaric Babs is still on good eyebrow-snarling form as the seductively sinister Cleo Hauff, who has conspired with her lover (Riccardo Garrone) and a variety of other bad apples to bump off her wealthy hubby.**

Dark-eyed, British-born Rank starlet Barbara Steele moved to Italy in the 1960s and became a true horror icon after her unforgettable appearance as an evil witch in Mario Bava's *Black Sunday*. Made five years on from *Black Sunday*, *Cemetery Of The Living Dead* sees Steele on the receiving end of ghostly vengeance for a change, rather than doling it out. Though the film doesn't make full use of her vividly menacing screen presence, barbaric Babs is still on good eyebrow-snarling form as the seductively sinister Cleo Hauff, who has conspired with her lover (Riccardo Garrone) and a variety of other bad apples to bump off her wealthy hubby. But her late spouse was a practitioner of the occult, and even though he's dropped off the twig his restless spirit still haunts the draughty corridors of the Hauff castle.

Lawyer Walter Brandi arrives to settle the estate just as the local township is, er, plagued by a series of strange deaths. It seems that the ghost of Hauff's late hubby is taking ghastly revenge on Steele and her co-conspirators, raising the bodies of medieval plague victims buried around his castle. In the end the zombies attack en-masse and only Brandi and the innocent Mirella Maravidi survive. "Pure water can save you," is the advice passed on to Brandi via an ancient rhyme, and just as the zombies are closing in for the kill, a purifying rain exorcises the evil spirits.

I first saw this back in the late 60s when it was released in the UK as *Terror Creatures From The Grave*, travelling round the lower class of British cinemas on a double bill with the Christopher Lee chiller, *Castle Of The Living Dead* (which was partly directed by cult hero Michael Reeves). At the time I wasn't overly impressed, but watching the film again on video brought a whole new appreciation of its merits.

For a start it was cut for the cinema release, and I'd not even seen the excellent sequence in which a wheelchair-ridden conspirator is driven to suicide, gruesomely wheeling himself on to the blade of a sword. Also, the choppy print I'd seen in the cinema wasn't half as effective in putting across the spooky atmosphere of the piece as the Vampix video version - a remarkably good transfer for its time, it has to be said.

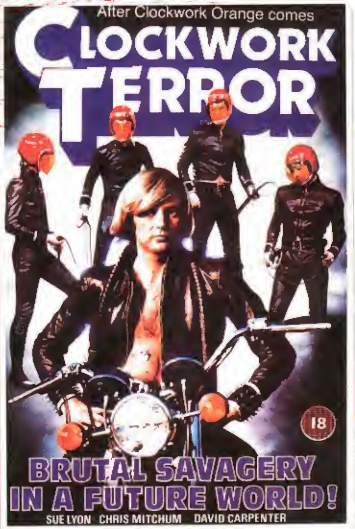
Watching the movie again, I was struck by how creepy the plague-spreading zombie ghosts were. The haunting music score (by Aldo Piga) adds a lot to the effectiveness of the film, and even the stilted dialogue and poor dubbing doesn't detract from the power of some of the movie's images, such as the memorable scene where the severed hands of plague victims start writhing in a glass cabinet, and it really adds to the scariness that the "zombies" are only glimpsed briefly in shadow, or shown as hands protruding from a tomb. The sound of them wheeling their carts along cobbled streets at night ("Bring out your dead!") really raises the goosebumps, and ensures that *Cemetery Of The Living Dead* is anything but a dead loss.

***DVD Availability:*** There's a very cheap disc available from low-budget US outfit Alpha Films. This utilises a very poor quality 16mm print which is, in technical terms, 'scratched to buggery.' Wait for the special edition (joke).

## Clockwork Terror 1975

Blonde-haired Chris Mitchum (less famous son of Robert) stars in this odd ripoff of Stanley Kubrick's *Clockwork Orange*, made in Madrid by the Spanish director of *The Cannibal Man*. Mitchum has the Malcolm McDowell role as the leader of a whip-wielding gang of futuristic hooligans who ride around in mini-moles and dress in fetishy leather gear. Wearing snazzy red crash helmets to prevent them from being identified, they look a bit like the zombified Earth people in the second *Doctor Who And The Daleks* movie!

Just like McDowell's "Droogs," Mitchum and his gang go around breaking into houses and terrorising innocent families, only in this instance Mitchum's David is shown to be a bit of a softie who just




smashes a few things and doesn't really participate in any of the nastier mayhem. All the rape and murder stuff takes place off screen anyway. After a while he gets bored with all the mindless violence and decides to split, which encourages his former pals to turn on him and beat him to a pulp.

Previous to this, we get to meet nurse Sue Lyon, a pretty blonde who lives alone in a big house - presumably nurses get paid better in the future? On the surface she seems like your caring, sharing Florence Nightingale type, saving lives and counselling the dying. But she also has a dark side, and when not on duty feels compelled to pick up men for casual sex. She goes out on the prowl dressed as a man in a business suit, or wearing a grey wig to make her look old. Then after she has sex, she kills her conquests with a surgeon's scalpel though the heart.

One night she is out getting rid of a victim's body when she is spotted by Mitchum, who follows her home and begins to blackmail her. But after he is beaten up by his former gang, he ends up in care of the authorities, who determine to try out a revolutionary new treatment on him which will carve out his criminal brain cells - similar to the brainwashing meted out to Mcdowell's character in the Kubrick classic. The film has a somewhat nastier fate in store for Mitchum, as nurse Lyon administers a more permanent "cure" with her scalpel!

The makers actually acknowledge their debt to the Kubrick film by having it trailered on TV just as Mitchum and his thugs invade a wealthy household. There's another neat in-joke later on, too, when a grey-wigged Lyon sits reading a copy of Nabokov's *Lolita* while she waits to ensnare her next victim - a very young Sue Lyon first made her name in the title role of that film, which of course was also directed by Stanley Kubrick! To give the actress some credit, she's easily the best thing about this movie, and deserved a better Hollywood career than she got.

As for the sci-fi elements, not much effort - or cash - has been expended to give the movie a futuristic look. The decor is mainly plastic 60s kitsch, and the special effects are limited to images projected on giant square TV screens. Predating Paul Verhoeven's *Robocop* the movie uses naff commercials to suggest the madness of future life, though these seem redundant since they lack any kind of satirical bite. The message here is the same as in the Kubrick film, that those in authority are inevitably more evil and corrupt than the individuals who buck the system. But it's hardly served up with the same genius.

***DVD Availability:*** Some DVD-R versions of this have been knocking around, seemingly duped from the German VHS - which was known as Murder In A Blue Room. The quality is merely okay and there are no extras.

## The Corpse Grinders 1971

As is often the case with maverick exploitation director Ted V. Mikels, he comes up with a great title and wonderfully lurid poster image, then goes off and makes a pretty poor schlock horror movie with lousy makeup effects. The best you can say is at least this one's funny on purpose.

It's a silly little gore comedy which stars Sanford Mitchell and J. Byron Foster as the owners of a cat food firm who find their sales booming when they accidentally turn a sleeping partner into cat food. The diabolical duo soon realise that eight out of ten moggies prefer human nosh to the same old pilchard or tuna mix, and the only problem they then face is how to maintain a constant supply of human hamburger without alerting the authorities. To this end they employ a sleazy grave-robber and a house strangler, and before long their canned product (sold with the ad-line, "For cats who like people") is a market leader.

Unfortunately for our entrepreneurial heroes, veterinary doctor Sean Kenney and his nurse Monika Kelly become suspicious after seeing a number of harmless domestic cats who have turned viciously on their owners. Wondering why normally placid pussies have become distinctly tigerish, the undercover vets soon track down the horrific reason: the cats have been turned on by the taste of human flesh. Captured by the killers before they can spill the beans to the cops, Kenney and Kelly seem to be the next candidates for pet mince. Can they escape ending up on a shelf in the local supermarket?

Made on a perilously low budget even for Ted, the movie's corpse grinding machine is little more than a painted cardboard box. The bodies go in one end and emerge as hamburger meat, pink coloured for girls and brown for boys! When the film was released to UK cinemas (on a value-for-money double bill with Antony Balch's *Horror Hospital*), it was shorn of most of these sequences, showing that the British censor has little sense of humour. The video release restores them, of course.

The film marked the screen debut of Steve Barkett, an actor-filmmaker who would go on to direct and star in the post-apocalypse feature *Aftermath*, produced by Mikels. Barkett is seen very briefly here as a wino who ends up as cat meat. Mikels also edited and composed the music score, so he has to take the full blame, which he seems happy to do, since it was his biggest box office hit and has gained quite a cult reputation over the years. He's got nothing to be proud of though. Generally inept in every way, the film has plenty of Ed Wood style acting and dialogue, and the sets are equally shoddy, looking like they are going to fall apart at any moment. It's lucky that the plot has no basis at all in reality, otherwise the government might be having to explain away an outbreak of Mad Bimbo Disease.

***DVD Availability:*** This one is readily available on disc in both the UK and the USA as part of *The Ted Mikels Collection*. The movie actually looks pretty fine on disc, and the US version gives us quite a few extras.

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## Cries in the Night 1980

**When a trashy couple refuse to obey granny's orders and leave, someone pushes their car off a nearby cliff, with them inside it! And when Barry Morse turns up in search of his missing wife and starts questioning gran about the affair his missus is supposed to have had with the late grandad, you just know he's not going to make it through to the end credits. Sure enough, his late night fishing session is rudely interrupted by a spade-wielding maniac, and he ends up buried in the woods in a shallow grave.**

Canadian filmmaker William (*Death Weekend*) Fruet made this moderately entertaining haunted house mystery - released in America as *Funeral Home* - which owes more than just a slight debt to *Psycho*. In fact if you've seen the Hitchcock classic you can safely skip this one altogether.

Lesley Donaldson stars as Heather, a pleasant young teenager who goes to visit her somewhat dotty and puritanical grandmother Maude (Kay Hawtrey). After a strange, portentous encounter with a black cat while hitchhiking, she arrives at her gran's place, a small motel that was once a funeral home. As one might expect, this creepy venue soon begins to exert a morbid grip on the youngster's imagination, and she is awakened in the dead of night by strange mutterings that appear to be originating from the cellar. It sounds to Heather as if her grandmother is arguing with her grandfather, but that surely can't be, as grandad dropped off the twig years ago!

Can any of this be linked to the fact that the local police are investigating a spate of missing persons cases? You bet it can. And it doesn't take a Sherlock Holmes to work out that the barmy granny is involved somehow. "You must never go down in the cellar - understand?" she says to Heather. Hmmm. So that's where the bodies are buried...

When a trashy couple refuse to obey granny's orders and leave, someone pushes their car off a nearby cliff, with them inside it! And when Barry Morse turns up in search of his missing wife and starts questioning gran about the affair his missus is supposed to have had with the late grandad, you just know he's not going to make it through to the end credits. Sure enough, his late night fishing session is rudely interrupted by a spade-wielding maniac, and he ends up buried in the woods in a shallow grave.

The discovery of a body in the lake furnishes the film with its creepiest scene. A teenage girl is swimming underwater when she suddenly comes across the white-faced corpse lodged amid the murky reeds. After this the police centre their attentions on the motel, where the body count is still rising fast.

A redneck gardener is the next to get it, stabbed in the back through shower curtains ing in a loose reworking of Psycho's most famed murder.

Events come to a head when Heather decides to check out the cellar along with her boyfriend Rick. What she discovers there is grandad's rotting corpse (see cover for details) and mad granny swinging an axe and talking in grandad's voice. Yes, betcha never guessed that gran was a geriatric Norman Bates! Well if you didn't, you're in a minority. The black cat makes another appearance here, keeping grandad's corpse company in an Edgar Allan Poe fashion!

Though it's completely predictable from start to finish, this PG-rated chiller is watchable enough. A creepy music score by Jerry Fielding and above-average performances prevent it from being a complete waste of time, even if it's nowhere near as grim and gruesome as you might expect from a gander at the cover image.

### DVD Availability

It's rumoured that there's a Canadian DVD-R of this out there, but we wouldn't know how or where to get our sticky mitts on it.

## Death Shock 1981

British glamour model and actress Linzi Drew and her long-time boyfriend Lindsay Honey (now very well known in the porn biz as cheeky Cockney camcorder chappie Ben Dover) made this obscure straight-to-video sex and horror film which opens with a pretty girl cycling down a remote country lane. Attracted by black magic-type chanting, she stumbles across a load of naked guys in a field. They chase her, strip her, and out comes a very big knife to join all the choppers on view. As it stabs downward we cut to a cheap title card, superimposed over a negative image of the victim screaming. Alfred Hitchcock eat your heart out…

From that point on it quickly becomes apparent that the makers are more interested in the sex than the horror, and we're into an extended sequence of three couples screwing in a field. This scene actually borders on hardcore and would probably not be acceptable in today's UK video market. Of course it's all very well employing performers who can shag well and look great with their clothes off, but they tend not to be very good at acting, and these characters recite their lines like they are learning English as a second language. The dialogue is pretty excruciating anyway, and mostly on the intellectual level of this girlie anti-lesbian jibe: "At least I prefer a stiff prick to tits and pussy!"

An excess of strained banter between the horny young couples, establishes that they are on an exciting jaunt via the countryside to sample the forbidden delights of Norwich. Inevitably their car breaks down, and they are picked up by a seemingly friendly vicar, who offers to put them up at his nearby mansion.

The vicar is played by Bill Wright, a well-known character in the porno business who nowadays masquerades under the pseudonym of Frank Thring and shouts hardcore for the Private organisation. Wright gets scripting credit and it turns out that he actually directed this movie as well. Lindsay said, "Bill directed the whole thing. I worked only as his assistant. But he was so appalled by the way it turned out that he didn't want his name on it, so he gave the credit to me instead." Having no shame, Lindsay accepted!

Honey later went on to direct *Wrong Time, Wrong Place* and *To Have Me Deadly* before finding fame and fortune as Ben Dover.

Lindsay's partner Linzi Drew also turns up in this as a sexy maid with outrageous purple eyeshadow ("Do you like my boobies? You can touch them if you like…"). She was and still is a very sexy and intelligent lady, but listening to her speak in that broad Bristol accent you can understand why Ken Russell dubbed her single line in *Salome's Last Dance*!

The sex scenes continue in the mansion bedrooms, with a lesbian encounter and a kinky threesome thrown in for variety. All these scenes look like they were shot hardcore and edited down (they weren't). But horror rears its ugly head again when a mad gap-toothed butler turns up to attack one of the girls. She smashes a bottle over his head and attaches a curling iron to his wedding tackle (I kid you not!).

Fleeing to the cellar, the distraught girl discovers the master of the house conducting the ancient black magic ritual (seen in many a softcore romp) of anointing Linzi Drew's boobs with a jumbo bottle of Johnson's Baby Oil. It seems that the satanists (and the vicar is one of them, of course) need "a virgin of sixteen summers" to offer up as a sacrifice. Good luck. If they can find one in this cast, I'm Charlie Chan's Number One Son.

The "twist" ending is enough to make you groan almost as loudly as the performers in the sex scenes, but don't hit that stop button just yet because the tape concludes with a series of outtakes presented under the title of *It'll Be Alright On The Bed* (!). These are actually less amusing than the stuff that was left in. An end title credit says: Don't Miss *Death Shock II* - Coming Soon! We'll pass, thank you. The budget was £5,000, and it's not up there on the screen.

### DVD Availability

Are you kidding? Lindsay Honey would love to get his hands on a copy of even a VHS tape of this one, since his original was 'nicked' by someone! Car boot sales were made for films like this…

## Death: The Ultimate Mystery 1979

The question of whether or not there is life after death is one that should interest us all. But this dramatised American documentary which promises to give us the lowdown on the subject comes up with little that is either interesting or convincing. It firmly takes the stance that an Afterlife exists and attempts to prove it via a series of interviews with people who have supposedly "died" on the operating table and had experiences of their soul leaving their body in much the same way as one would discard an old suit of clothes. But these so-called interviews have a certain falseness about them, as if the people concerned are acting out their parts in a low-budget movie - which they probably are.

The central figure, and our guide to "What's in in the Next Life" is actor Cameron Mitchell, a B-movie favourite due to his work with Italian cult hero Mario Bava on movies like *Erik The Conqueror* and *Blood And Black Lace*. The filmmakers want us to believe that it's Mitchell himself who we see driving around, but it's really just an unidentified actor with a beard! However, there's no denying it's the doom-laden tones of the star of *The High Chapparal* that narrate glimpses of such grisly sights as the grotesque mummified remains of past residents of Guanajuato, Mexico. These crusty corpses are apparently on show for tourists and bargain basement moviemakers alike, so how come we've never seen them on *The Holiday Programme*?

Also on offer is a Cook's tour of Egypt and a peek inside the Pyramids, while various experts describe the process by which the bodies of the ancient Pharaohs were preserved to this day. Then we're off to India for a brief stint with a cross-legged mystical meditator whose name I can't pronounce or spell, but who looks like someone who once tried to sell me a record album outside Tottenham Court Road tube station! This guru-like character professes to having woken up on the operating table after an enlightening journey past death's portal, whereupon he advised the astonished doctors who had just about drawn a blanket over his head to go and have a cup of tea! Sounds all too familiar a story in today's NHS…

The film continues with a number of dragged-out interviews with people who have had similar experiences, and an examination of how hypnotism can revert subjects to a previous life - which supposedly proves that we have all been here before. Strangely enough, viewers may indeed experience some deja-vu watching all this. Shot as part of a series called *The Gamma Chronicles*, this fairly tame film is often thought to be the inspiration for the much more harrowing *Faces Of Death* series.

It would be nice to have concrete proof that death is not a one-way trip, but you won't find it here. There have been some much better British documentaries on the same subject, but our inherent fascination with what happens to us after we've shuffled off this mortal coil ensures that even dodgy ones like this exert a certain fascination. Cameron Mitchell passed away some years back, so I guess he really could answer those questions now, if only we could find a way to get in touch with him. Personally, I'm a great believer in reincarnation, which is why I'm leaving all my worldly belongings to myself!

### DVD Availability

Despite the popularity of the *Faces of Death* series, this similarly themed 'mondo' pic has never been issued on disc. Another ultimate mystery?

# NASTIES! the return

Having exhaustively examined the original official DPP 'Nasties' list of the late 70s/early 80s, we move on to an A-Z of some of the nastiest... and weirdest... movies that somehow escaped the net!

## Don't Open The Door 1979

**As she rattles around in the big old empty house, Amanda is plagued by a series of creepy phone calls seemingly designed to send her mad. Who is making them, and more importantly do we really give a damn?**

Texan filmmaker S.F. Brownrigg had a big hit with his 1973 *Don't Look In The Basement*, a fairly effective low-budget psychothriller in which psychotic inmates took over their asylum. Six years later he made this much less interesting movie with a similar title and some of the same cast members. He should have quit while he was ahead.

Susan Bracken stars as Amanda, a young woman whose mother was butchered to death thirteen years earlier - a scene shown in far from graphic detail in a dull pre-credits sequence. Returning to the house where it happened to visit her dying granny, she becomes embroiled in an inheritance tussle with a motley collection of sinister relatives and hangers-on.

As she rattles around in the big old empty house, Amanda is plagued by a series of creepy phone calls seemingly designed to send her mad. Who is making them, and more importantly do we really give a damn? Eventually our heroine gets as irritated as most viewers, and she snaps and stabs her visiting boyfriend, who plunges to his death through the ornate eye of a spiral staircase - the film's one and only moment of visual inspiration. But then she gets another phone call...

The daft thing about this movie is that we know early on who is actually making the calls, a geeky-looking local guy who wants Amanda to leave the house to him. Therefore all the prowling subjective camerawork (no doubt a nod to the success of the then-recent *Halloween*) and other hackneyed suspense techniques are completely wasted. Even the one twist the movie has to offer - the revelation that the mysterious phone calls are coming from within the building itself - was done so much better in Fred Walton's *When A Stranger Calls* and Bob Clark's excellent *Black Christmas*.

Though effectively enough acted by Bracken and the rest of the unknown cast, the movie fails to convince for a minute. Most damaging of all is Bracken's sudden descent into madness. She seems a stronger and more resourceful heroine than most, and it's patently ridiculous that some guy whispering on the end of a phone line could send her off her trolley in the space of a few days. There's no more reality in the murder scenes, which are poorly staged, with minimal special effects. The weakest of them sees somebody getting bashed on the head with what is quite obviously a bendy rubber hammer!

Brownrigg does vainly attempt to stamp some auteurist identity on the proceedings, but such touches as casting Gene Ross as a character named "The Judge" again (after the part Ross played in *Don't Look In The Basement*), and tossing in grotesquely lit random shots of doll's faces (why?) smacks more of desperation than anything else. Most of the characters are cliched in the extreme, and the climax is particularly annoying - the heroine just plonks herself down in a *Psycho*-type rocking chair as the phone begins to ring again. It would have been far more satisfying for her to have gone upstairs and offed the geeky guy as well! Don't bother to watch it.

***DVD Availability:***
VCI Entertainment released a Region free disc of this a couple of years back. The 1.85:1 anamorphic transfer looked pretty good in that one, apart from the expectedly grainy 70s-style photography. Extras included a theatrical trailer for *Deer* which helpfully gave the entire plot away, a brief, Brownrigg bio and trailers for *Kiss Of The Tarantula* and *Ruby*, both also available from VCI.

## Demented 1980

Wes Craven's brutal *Last House On The Left* and Meir Zarchi's uncompromising *I Spit On Your Grave* were the rape movies that attracted the most attention from the Nasties Squad, but here's another of the same ilk that mysteriously got missed by our protective guardians. Or maybe they just realised, in a rare moment of sanity, that it's too poorly made to be taken seriously.

Written by actor Alex Rebar (who is best known for playing *The Incredible Melting Man*), the movie

stars Sallee Elyse as a wealthy and attractive young lady who goes right off her trolley after she's raped in a horse stall by a bunch of masked thugs. This fairly graphic and unpleasant rape scene actually opens the movie, and we then flash forward to some time later when Elyse returns home from the sanatorium, supposedly recovered from her grim ordeal. Yeah, right. Just don't let her near that pitchfork…

The psychiatrist in charge of Sallee's case informs her smooth-talking surgeon husband Bruce Gilchrist (actually porn actor Harry Reems under a pseudonym) that, "Being raped by four hoodlums has got to be one of the most mentally devastating things a woman can go through." No kidding. But frankly Bruce/Harry doesn't give a damn, because unbeknownst to Sallee, he has been carrying on an affair with a tasty young nymphomaniac. While he leaves his troubled wife alone in the house she begins to experience Repulsion-type hallucinations which can only lead to much bloodshed and an annoying freeze frame ending.

The fun starts when a bunch of neighbourhood kids decide it might be fun to spook Sallee by invading her home at night wearing clown masks. But they soon find out that it's not a good idea to startle a lady who keeps a freshly-sharpened meat cleaver under her pillow, and heads roll, almost literally. One of the intruders gets it gruesomely in the neck, while another has his hair parted in the centre - and his skull. Another isn't so lucky: Sallee loops some piano wire round his testicles and yanks 'em off - yow! Then she chops him in the stomach with the cleaver for good measure. That's what I call overkill.

The fourth intruder is drugged and treated to a candle-lit meal by the smiling madwoman before he gets blasted at close range with a double-barrelled shotgun. Which only leaves hubby to sort out. When the two-timing heel returns from his evening tryst with his bit on the side, he finds Sallee waiting for him in exactly the pose you can see on the cover. And she's not in a mood to listen to lame excuses about the darts match going on longer than expected…

This might have been quite effective if Elyse had been a halfway decent actress. But since her amateur emoting doesn't convince for a moment, it's hard to sympathise with her as a victim, and even more impossible to believe in her as a psychotic killer. The gore makeup is none too effective either, and only the castration scene will make male viewers wince. *Demented* it may be, fun it ain't!

### *DVD Availability:*

No sign of even an updated VHS release for this obscurity, and frankly we can't say we are too bothered. Guess we can wait for the High Definition Director's Cut, eh?

## Deported Women of The SS Special Section 1976

Any film that opens with a woman pulling her knickers down to sit on a grotty toilet in a crowded prison train is not going to win any awards for good taste, and sure enough this markedly unpleasant Italian-made concentration camp movie contains something to offend just about everybody.

The "fun" starts right away as two women trying to escape from the prison train are bloodily machine-gunned. Then, when the rest of the prisoners arrive at their destination, one of the first sights that greets them is the naked body of a woman being carried off, her genitals and breasts covered in blood. *Hogan's Heroes* this ain't!

This is immediately followed by a scene in which the women have to strip and be inspected by the predominantly lesbian camp staff, who prod their bits with truncheons and leer lasciviously. Still naked, the prisoners head for the showers, and then it's down to the camp hairdressers for a trim of their pubes - the camera zooms in and out for a really close-up look at this!

The girls stand to attention while an icy blonde female guard gives them their duties and questions them about their backgrounds. ("Are your parents still living?" "I don't know."). It transpires that these girls are not Jewish, and so rather than being destined for certain destruction in Hitler's gas ovens, they will be sent on to labour camps. Some will be retained, however, to work in "The Joy Division," not a pop group, rather the elite SS "field whores" who provide sexual services for burned out officers.

While the candidates are being sorted out, the most butch of the many lesbo guards selects a "new fish" to rub pubes with - bad continuity that, since we saw them all being shaved off in a previous scene. Of course there are a few good Germans in the camp. Well, one, anyway - a hunky but soulful blonde guy who makes olympic class love to one of the girls in the courtyard after lights out. "The great German super-race is coming to an end," he admits. "But the commandant is crazy. None of you will survive." He gives the girl a cyanide capsule so she can take the easy way out should she find herself earmarked for medical experimentation. The cyanide comes in useful for both of them when they are spotted and ordered to repeat their sexual performance in broad daylight in front of the entire camp…

The commandant is played by John Steiner, an Italo-exploitation stalwart who also appeared in the Tinto Brass Nazi "romp," *Salon Kitty*. He is indeed crazy to have taken a role in this, but gives it his all as usual, barking out orders in a mad monotone, sodomising his male second in command and setting up kinky sex sessions in an effort to break the spirit of the female prisoner he fancies the most - the one he calls, "My little eidelweiss!"

Two of the girls plot an escape, which shouldn't be hard since the walls appear to be made of balsa wood, but when one is caught she has to suffer *Mark Of The Devil*-type squashed finger torture before having her head gruesomely bashed in by the mad blonde guard. Then the prisoners get wind of a secret passageway that will lead them out of the camp, and plot an escape en-masse. First of all, though, they have a few scores to settle.

The icy blonde gets a dagger in her throat, another nasty guard is garroted, and a third is suffocated with a pillow. That only leaves commandant Steiner, who gets the nasty comeuppance he deserves. The girl he has become obsessed with finally lets him have his wicked way with her, only she's jammed some razor blades up her love tunnel, and Steiner's ensuing fate will bring tears to the eyes of many a male viewer - we even get a quick view of his bloodied member!

This is all pretty nasty stuff, easily as grim as such "official" nasties as *SS Experiment Camp* and *The Gestapo's Last Orgy*. It's also quite well made of its kind, and a worthwhile viewing experience for fans of this grubby little genre.

I make no further comment other than to point out the fact that bad taste never killed anybody, which is certainly more than can be said for Adolf Hitler.

### *DVD Availability:*

This movie remains banned in the UK, not surprising really. Though many Nazi Nasties have turned up on DVD in Europe and America, *Deported Women* has only been issued on VHS and is now very hard to find, so those who kept your original pre-cert tapes have a valuable collector's item here!

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## Die Sister Die 1974

**In flashback we learn that both Edward and Amanda conspired in the murder of their nympho sister after discovering she was carrying on an incestuous relationship with their father.**

Hollywood veterans Edith Atwater and Kent Smith (who were married in real life) appear in this deservedly obscure low-budget psychothriller. Atwater plays Amanda Price, a reclusive character living alone in a huge mansion. She has attempted suicide on a number of occasions, but family doctor Smith has always been on hand to save her life, much to the chagrin of Amanda's brother, Edward (Jack Ging). He would rather she dropped off the twig so he could collect his long-overdue inheritance.

To speed things along he employs sexy nurse Esther (played by Antoinette Bower of *Superbeast*) to, er, take care of his sister. The idea is that she will gain Amanda's confidence and then bump her off in a discreet fashion. But Edward's scheme goes off the rails when the two women start to become close friends, and he has to embark upon Plan B, which involves bumping his sister off himself and implicating Esther in the murder...

In flashback we learn that both Edward and Amanda conspired in the murder of their nympho sister after discovering she was carrying on an incestuous relationship with their father. They have the body walled up in the cellar, and it is the guilt of this act that has been driving Amanda to try to take her own life. At one point she goes to confession to get it off her chest, but halfway through she spots that the "priest" in the other booth is wearing her brother's ring!

In the end Amanda does indeed do herself in, leaping from the roof after telling Esther the whole story of her family's twisted history. When Edward arrives he tries to place the blame on Esther for his sister's death, but she has an ace up her sleeve - the wall of the cellar has been broken open to reveal the decayed corpse of their long-dead sibling - shades of Edgar Allan Poe's *The Black Cat*!

A belated entry in the already overworked *Baby Jane* subgenre of hothouse gothic melodrama, *Die, Sister, Die* shares some similarities with *Les Diabolique*, in that it's basically about two fairly strong-willed women up against a devious, murderous male. Unfortunately it doesn't manage to serve up any of that movie's scares. The performances are good, with Ging particularly effective as the smarmy Edward - he's a bit like William Shatner on the early *Star Trek* episodes! It's only a shame that his character doesn't get a nice and gruesome comeuppance rather than just being led away by the cops at the end. Apart from the rotting corpse at the end, the only horror elements that creep in can be found in a couple of distorted dream sequences marroring Atwater's tormented state of mind. In the goriest of them she imagines herself decapitating her sister after finding her in bed with "daddy." Not that this is a total waste of time. The eerie mansion where the action takes place is well utilised, and there's a notably atmospheric music score by Hugo Friedhofer. But the end result is somewhat predictable, overly talky and very slowly paced. Strictly for those that want to see what the star of *The Cat People* looks like in his dotage!

**DVD Availability:**
This one's out as a Region Free US release which retails at about a fiver - and it's still overpriced! The quality of the fullscreen image on the disc is no better than the old VHS, and the sound quality's pretty appalling.

## Don't Answer The Phone! 1979

Inspired by the real-life horrors of the Los Angeles Hillside Strangler case, this memorably sleazy psychothriller had its name changed at the last minute to capitalise on the early 80s popularity of women-in-jeopardy movies with Don't in the title. Chunky Nicholas Worth is highly effective as the killer, a round-faced Vietnam vet dressed in combat gear and a stocking mask, who rapes, strangles and mutilates young women. The suggestion is that these women have "asked for it" by dressing in a sexually provocative manner, and the killer

approaches his "mission" with a religious fervour, preparing by doing a body-building routine in front of a statue of Christ crucified!

Worth is a photographer, and some of his victims are lured to his apartment by the promise of having a "glamour" portfolio taken. Others he gets from among the mixed-up clients of local radio show psychologist Flo Gerrish. He often phones Gerrish himself, using the persons of "Ramon" and complaining of headaches and feelings of aggression, and in the end it is his obsession with her that leads to his downfall.

The murders are leeringly staged, with the camera often putting you in the shoes of the killer as he spies on his victims getting undressed. His favoured method is to twist a coin-filled stocking round the victim's throats, and one of them clutches a teddy bear as he moves in for the kill. When not depicting Worth's murderous activities the movie concentrates on the somewhat ineffectual efforts of homicide cops James Westmoreland and Ben Frank to track the killer down. These involve bringing in a psychic, accidentally arresting a toy salesman and raiding a brothel - a scene that is played mainly for comedy as each room yields some new, laughably odd perversity. Eventually Worth goes too far, asking a prostitute to phone Gerrish's radio show and strangling her on air! This leads Westmoreland and Frank to discover his true identity, and the scene is set for a final bloody confrontation between cop and killer in Gerrish's home.

Though not a physical match for Worth, Westmoreland manages to plug him (rather appropriately) in the testicles, and then finish him off with a hail of bullets in the back as he takes a gurgly slow-motion death-dive into the swimming pool - shades of David Hess' demise at the end of Ruggero Deodato's *House On The Edge Of The Park*. Westmoreland then delivers the *Dirty Harry*-like final line, "Adios, creep!"

This gloating comment is typical of the nature of the film as a whole, which has something that will offend most sensibilities, from its ludicrously stereotypical depictions of black pimps, hookers and "faggots" to the killer's profile as a tormented Catholic with a father fixation. Virtually every victim is shown topless, and the viewer is asked to share in Worth's sadism and get a vicarious kick out of his activities. One can't imagine such a film being made nowadays, let alone shown at theatres, and it certainly justifies the tag of "nasty."

**DVD Availability:**
Anchor Bay UK put this out on disc last year, but theirs was hardly a 'restoration' job. The fullscreen image was pretty grainy and the only extras were text-based biographies and a small stills and poster gallery. The BBFC website says the film is uncut, but sadly Anchor Bay submitted a pre-cut version in the first place!

## Elsa, Fraulein SS 1976

Not to be confused with the far nastier Dyanne Thorne *"Ilsa"* series of concentration camp exploiters, this salacious Italian-made effort opens with real life monochrome news footage of WW2 bombings, showing Germany taking a pounding. A sober narrator informs us that "It is 1943. The German advance has been checked. So called strategic withdrawals are a warning of threatening defeat..." But Adolf's still a couple of years away from blowing his mad brains out and, worried about unrest in the ranks, he has issued an order to the Gestapo that they must track down any conspirators who are plotting against the army regime.

A top-ranking military man is summoned to Swastika Central and ordered to send a train loaded with pretty women to entertain the front line officers. "That is good news," he smiles. But there's always a catch. He's then told he knows too much and will have to be shot. But at least he'll get a posthumous medal. Swings and roundabouts, really... The real purpose of the train is to uncover any top-ranking traitors in the German army. Every carriage is bugged, and whenever loose pillow talk turns to the subject of "Wouldn't it be a good idea to get rid of Hitler?" in march the storm troopers and grab the lippy subversive for a swift track-side execution. That'll teach them to keep their mouth shut next time!

In charge of the railbound brothel (Feels On Wheels?) is good party member Elsa (Malisa Longo), a sexy young harlot who runs the service far more efficiently that Railtrack would under similar circumstances. Nothing so trivial as the wrong kind of leaves on the line is allowed to slow the progress of her bonking box cars. But the allies have managed to smuggle someone on board, and they plot to derail the entire sick enterprise. There are some nasty moments of violence in the movie, which are all the more effective for being shown swiftly in a straightforward, non-gloating manner. The callous, bullet-through-the-head execution scenes may not be as shocking as those depicted in *Schindler's List*, but they do have the look of reality about them. There's a Sally Bowles/Marlene Dietrich-type cabaret number from a sexy babe in feather boa and basque, and plenty of female nudity, though the actual sex scenes are fairly tame and obviously simulated - shame, really, considering they had notorious French porno queen Claudine Beccarie on board!

Fairly slow-moving and uneventful for the first hour, the film starts to pick up for the final scenes where the identity of the traitor is revealed and a rebel army launches a low budget attack on the train, not blowing up anything too expensive in the process. The ending is a real disappointment though, since Elsa does not get to suffer a horrible death for all the torment she has caused. Instead, one of the rebels goes to shoot her, and the local priest knocks the gun aside with a lecturing "Thou shalt not kill," despite the fact that the track is already littered with dead Nazis. Elsa runs off into the forest and that's all, folks. Not much of a lesson there for future generations, but what the heck, Malisa does look great in that uniform...

**DVD Availability:**
The US-based Media Blasters/Shriek Show label released a good quality disc of this movie a couple of years back. Apart from featuring a colourful 1.85:1 anamorphic transfer of the movie the disc contained an up to date interview with star Malisa Longo, still looking extremely gorgeous (but not wearing a Nazi uniform!). Oh well, you can't have everything...

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## Escape From Cell Block 3 1974

There's nothing like a good Women In Prison movie for stirring both a chap's social conscience and his y-fronts. You know this is going to hit the spot since the very first scene is set in the showers with a bunch of naked bimbos setting about one of their warders. But wait a moment, this is just the start of a successful escape attempt, and as the girls overpower the warder and dodge a few sleepy guards it quickly becomes apparent that it's a Women Out Of Prison movie instead. What the heck, we'll give it a try anyway...

The five escapees jog down the road to a bad rock tune, the camera moving in close to catch their boobs jiggling about in their low-cut prison denims. They steal a car and push the male driver down a ravine. "Are you sure you didn't hurt that guy" says a particularly naive member of the group. But with the cops on their tail they decide to abandon the vehicle and do more slow motion boob-jiggling jogging, which makes perfect sense to me.

Then they come to a river, which is the perfect excuse to get naked again for some topless-only bathing and a teensy bit of character definition. There's the tough black bitch, the unfeasibly violent blonde, the innocent "new fish" who's

**One of the girls hangs herself in desperation at this point, and we know just what she's going through. She should have hanged her agent instead.**

probably been framed into the jug in the first place, the experienced old-timer who tries to calm everyone down, and of course the butch lesbian. They've all got stories to tell, mostly about how men have let them down ("I really tried with one guy. But he turned out to be a pimp and a hophead". Yeah, we're all bastards, baby.

Looking for a place to spend the night, the girls break into the home of a frizzy-headed Mexican guy with a moustache and take him hostage - he looks like somebody out of an old *Starsky And Hutch* episode. The black girl likes the cut of his jib ("Let's get your clothes off so I can see what you look like..."), but they have to shoot him anyway, possibly because he's such a bad actor. One of the girls hangs herself in desperation at this point, and we know just what she's going through. She should have hanged her agent instead.

The remaining four head into the big city to get some money together, which entails tough blonde Debbie putting the squeeze on her pimp boyfriend Jerry, and the black girl J.C. organising new passports with the help of her Huggy Bear lookalike brother, who runs a stable of bitches. He sends two of his girls out to fleece a balding fat guy, who complains, "Don't I get anything for my money?" He gets beaten up.

Now they've got enough money to hire a plane to get over the border, but they're not home free yet. Just as the plane arrives, so does a cop, and a shootout ensues that leaves three of the girls dead. The camera lingers on their bodies lying in the desert dust, and all that's missing is a final subtitle saying "Crime doesn't pay!"

This dated American exploitationer is cliched and predictable, but it's also quite well made of its kind, with decent enough performances and some effectively staged action scenes, though a few more blood squibs would have been welcome.

**DVD Availability:** Unlike the tough babes who star in this movie, it remains unreleased. A shame really, because it's actually a lot better than some of the trashy Jess Franco WIP movies that are readily available on disc!

## Evil Come, Evil Go 1972

"Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly they are ravening vultures." A somewhat inappropriate bible quote (from Matthew) opens this 1972 chiller, a typically sleazy effort from Robert Chinn, a well-known producer of porno movies back in the 70s. Given Chinn's background, it's hardly surprising that the movie is shorter on biblical subtext than it is semi-pornographic sex scenes, many of them too strong to survive the Video Recordings Act in one piece. There's also a fair bit of gore on offer in this tawdry tale of gore on a crazy woman who travels across country on a mission from God to rid the world of evil men

As portrayed in a caricaturish fashion by the remarkably untalented Cleo O'Hara, Sister Sarah Jane Butler, a batty hillbilly belle, is a rare example of a female serial killer, plying her trade on the

screen ages before Aileen Wurnos took the role in real life. Why our heroine has such a downer on men is never explained, but she certainly meets some poor specimens of the male race in her cross-country killing spree. One slimy character makes the mistake of telling her he has three kids scattered round the country and doesn't intend to pay any child support - so she knifes him to death, *Basic Instinct*-style, right in the middle of a vigorous bonking session. What an exit, coming and going at the same time!

Preaching against pleasurable sex on the streets of L.A. (in a scene shot in front of Grauman's Chinese Theatre), Sarah recruits a willing disciple in the shape of Penny (Sandra Henderson), whose intellect is such that she probably needs to take her bra off to count up to two. "I'm a lesbian, but I'll stop it," she says.

Penny turns out to be the landlady of a small apartment block, and she kicks out her more licentious tenants before beginning an intimate girl/girl relationship with Sarah (that resolution didn't last long). Shortly after that the two girls go out on the pull, bringing fashion-challenged fellahs back to the apartment where they are hacked to death by the wild-eyed Sarah. It all ends as pointlessly as it has begun, with the girls selecting yet another victim and walking off into the woods with him, while a long-haired hippie singer wanders after them strumming the movie's mind-numbing theme song. "Sarah Jane, Sarah Jane… Sister Sarah, you're insane. But you always pull it off and walk away…"

Really no more than a poor excuse for a series of fairly graphic sex scenes, *Evil Come, Evil Go* is as amateurishly shot as most porno flicks, with atrocious performances and some classic moments of bad continuity, like in the sequence where Sarah indoctrinates Penny into her mad religious beliefs. Penny is tied to the bed fully clothed, and when we cut to another angle, presto, Penny is topless. Well, it saves celluloid, for which we should all be grateful in this case.

Writer/director Walt Davis has a cameo role as a pig farmer, a job he might well have been advised to take up full time, and the legendary porn stud John Holmes can be glimpsed as one of the pool players in a bar scene - his opponent is another porno star, Rick Cassidy. Big John was also assistant director on this, after which he wisely went back to doing what he did best - although it killed him in the end!

**DVD Availability:** Another real obscurity, this has never even been re-released on VHS, let alone put out on one of those new-fangled digital disc thingies! John Holmes fans should get a petition up right away.

## Exorcism 1977

Spain's premier horror actor, Paul Naschy, stars in this rickety, badly dubbed Iberian ripoff of *The Exorcist* set (for no explicable reason) in England. It centres around the devilish activities of Leila (Maria Perschy), the daughter of an English aristo who gets involved with satanists in her search for new and exciting "kicks."

The opening scenes find Perschy participating in a too-dark-to-see black magic ceremony on the beach. She slices herself with a knife and drinks blood out of a chalice. On the way home her car swerves off the road and smashes down a ravine. She survives, but her personality has changed for the worse, and it isn't long before Leila begins to be very rude to visitors and use the kind of language more often heard on the docks.

Unlike her role model, Linda Blair, she doesn't twist her head around at a 360 degree angle, but someone else metes out this treatment to her meddling brother when he calls in bearded reverend Naschy to give Maria the clerical once-over. The mystery killer also bumps off her former boyfriend in the same manner, leaving him stomach down on the floor, but face up at the same time!

In the eyes of the police, the chief suspect for the killings is Naschy himself, who used to be a weight-lifter and presumably has the strength to twist heads round backwards. The detective in charge of the case tells him, "Don't leave town, Father!" Later on, Naschy is visited by a church superior, who's a bit concerned about the ritual nature of the killings. "It has to be someone who is very disturbed, either unbalanced or a religious renegade," he says. *Cracker* has nothing on this.

Determined to prove his innocence, Naschy does a little bit of digging and uncovers black magic ceremonies at a nearby castle ruin. Naked women touch each other up while weird music plays in the background. Naschy enjoys the show for a while, but then a bunch of British bobbies run in and break things up, truncheons erect, and arrest the lot of them, including the brutish family butler Udo, who seems to be master of ceremonies at the event. Udo confesses to the killings just before leaping out of the police station window to his death, and the case appears to be closed.

But his evil spirit returns to take over Perschy's body, make her talk dirty, and give her a grotty new look. In fact the makeup work for Perschy doesn't go beyond what you see on the video sleeve, and don't hold your breath waiting for the pea soup vomit!

"Dear God! Is it possible?" asks Naschy when he hears of this. He should know, he wrote the bloody thing! There's only one solution, and it's contained in the title of the movie. A few sprinkles of holy water and some well-chosen prayers while Perschy chucks herself at the walls soon sorts things out, but the evil spirit comes out of her and goes into a German shepherd dog, who attacks our hero somewhat unconvincingly in the daft climax.

Naschy claims he wrote this well before *The Exorcist*, but somehow we doubt it… Considering the subject matter, it's surprisingly dull stuff. Most of the running time is taken up with long, boring conversations between Naschy and various members of the cast, in which he scratches his beard thoughtfully, puffs on a pipe, and dispenses nuggets of religious wisdom. Here's one from me: Father forgive him, for he knows not how to make a decent movie.

**DVD Availability:** There is an okay quality Synapse Films DVD of this floating around, but we hear that an American company called BCI intend to release *Exorcism* on disc shortly in a brand new HD anamorphic transfer. The disc will contain lots of extras. Other Naschy titles on the BCI slate are *Night Of The Werewolf, Vengeance Of The Zombies, Human Beasts, Horror Rises From The Tomb* and *Blue Eyes Of The Broken Doll.*